

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This study was initiated to analyze the opportunities for mixed-use development in College Station and the City's policies for encouraging this development pattern. A subcommittee of the Planning and Zoning Commission met with City staff over three months to develop recommendations for the City's policies and Land Use Plan.

In recent decades, almost all of the City's growth has been suburban style single-use developments. The Comprehensive Plan adopted in 1997 included a mixed-use category on the Land Use Plan; however, the market has not produced mixed-use development. This has created some confusion and conflict as development requests, driven by the market, have been submitted for land designated for mixed-use on the Land Use Plan.

This study identifies a simple definition: Mixed-use development is the combination of different but compatible land uses within a single building, site, or district. It recognizes that there are a variety of mixed-use types and styles and that no one unique set of characteristics exist. It also emphasizes that some developments occur with a mix of uses in close proximity to each other, but not in a compatible or integrated manner that fits the true meaning of mixed-use.

Focusing on College Station, the study identifies three opportunities for mixed-use development that are likely to occur in College Station. The three types of mixed-use include Historic Mixed-use, Single-use Conversions, and Master Planned Developments. Historic Mixed-use is primarily the Northgate area, which developed in a mixed-use pattern before modern land use regulations. Single-use Conversions are the redevelopment or redesign of shopping centers and retail strip centers into mixed-use developments that accommodate pedestrians, integrate compatible uses and transition into surrounding neighborhoods. The third type is Master Planned Development, which is new development on larger undeveloped tracts of land. Not all Master Planned Developments may be mixed-use, but they provide the best opportunity for new mixed-use development.

It is unlikely that attempts to force mixed-use development through the Land Use Plan designations would be successful. In addition, there do not appear to be any areas in the City (with the exception of Northgate) where mixed-use is considered the only desirable development pattern. Therefore, mixed-

use is not an appropriate category for the Land Use Plan at this time. This does not mean that mixed-use development is not desirable or that it should not be allowed or encouraged. None of the three types of mixed-use development identified require a designation on the Land Use Plan to be implemented. Therefore, it is recommended that the City have a policy that allows for and encourages mixed-use development, but should not force it to occur in any specific location through the Land Use Plan. This means removing the mixed-use designation from the Land Use Plan, and replacing it with other designations that better represent the desired uses and development patterns.

The study also recommends that a new land use category called Planned Development be added to the Land Use Plan. This is to be used where larger areas of land may develop with a mix, or collection, of uses, but not necessarily a mixed-use pattern. The Planned Development category emphasizes the need to master plan the area to ensure appropriate placement of different uses. The recommendations in this study include proposed amendments to the Land Use Plan to replace mixed-use with other appropriate designations.